

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
/061 W

-----079066 012155Z /66

R 011942Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6329
INFO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 03781

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR GW CZ
SUBJECT: CZECH FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO FRG

REFS: (A) BONN 2190; (B) PRAGUE 176; (C) BONN 20595;
(D) BONN 19081

BEGIN SUMMARY. CZECH FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK SURPRISED
HIS GERMAN HOSTS BY NOT GIVING A DEFINITIVE RESPONSE TO
THEIR OFFER OF APRIL 10 TO 14, 1978 FOR A HUSAK VISIT TO
THE FRG. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, GERMAN OFFICIALS BELIEVE
THE CZECH LEADER WILL ACCEPT THE DATES. THEIR
SPECULATION AS TO THE CAUSE FOR THE DELAY RUNS THE
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GAMUT FROM INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO HUSAK'S VISIT TO EAST-
WEST DIFFICULTIES AT CSCE. GERMAN OFFICIALS SEE ONLY
LIMITED POSSIBILITIES FOR MOVEMENT IN CZECH-GERMAN
RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. CZECH FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK VISITED BONN
FROM FEBRUARY 22 TO 24. HIS MISSION, ACCORDING TO GERMAN

SOURCES, WAS TWOFOLD: (A) PREPARE THE GROUNDWORK FOR A VISIT IN APRIL BY GENERAL SECRETARY HUSAK AND (B) BRING SOME LIFE INTO THE LONG STAGNANT AND OFTEN FROSTY CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP. RESULTS WERE MIXED.

2. LATE LAST YEAR, THE GERMANS OFFERED THE TIMEFRAME OF APRIL 10 TO 14, 1978 FOR A HUSAK VISIT. AS THE CZECH'S HAD LONG EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SUCH A VISIT, THE GERMANS EXPECTED A TIMELY RESPONSE TO THEIR INVITATION. IN THE ABSENCE OF A REPLY FROM PRAGUE, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, DURING HIS MEETING WITH CHNOUPEK, ASKED IF THE DATES WERE ACCEPTABLE. MUCH TO SCHMIDT'S SURPRISE AND IRRITATION, CHNOUPEK REPLIED THAT BEFORE ANSWERING HE WISHED TO HEAR THE CHANCELLOR'S VIEWS ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS. IN RESPONSE, SCHMIDT EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION OVER THE STATE OF DETENTE, WHILE VOICING DISPLEASURE WITH THE LACK OF PROGRESS AT CSCE. CHNOUPEK, APPARENTLY SATISFIED WITH SCHMIDT'S ANSWER, THEN SAID THE APRIL 10 TO 14 TIMING WAS SUITABLE FOR HUSAK. HE DID NOT,

HOWEVER, DEFINITELY SAY THE GENERAL SECRETARY WOULD COME AT THAT TIME. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FOREIGN OFFICE, CHNOUPEK SIMILARLY DECLINED TO GIVE A DEFINITE COMMITMENT.
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3. FRG OFFICIALS HAVE DECIDED TO KEEP THEIR POWDER DRY FOR A WEEK OR TWO BEFORE RAISING THE MATTER AGAIN. THEY POINT OUT CHNOUPEK LEFT BONN A WEEK AGO AND THAT THE TIMING STILL REMAINS IN LIMBO. THEY BELIEVE A FORMAL CZECH RESPONSE WILL BE REQUIRED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS IF THE VISIT IS TO TAKE PLACE AS PLANNED. ON BALANCE, THEY BELIEVE HUSAK WILL EVENTUALLY ACCEPT THE DATES SINCE FAILURE TO DO SO -- AFTER CHNOUPEK TOLD SCHMIDT THE TIMING POSED NO PROBLEM FOR HIS CHIEF -- WOULD BE A GRIEVOUS INSULT.

4. OUR FOREIGN OFFICE AND CHANCELLERY CONTACTS ARE NOT SURE WHAT IS BEHIND THE CZECH HESITANCY. THEY HAVE LONG BELIEVED THERE IS OPPOSITION TO A HUSAK VISIT WITHIN THE CZECH LEADERSHIP, THOUGHT THEY ARE UNABLE TO PINPOINT ITS ORIGINS. THEY SPECULATE THAT OPPONENTS OF THE VISIT MAY BE INSISTING IT BE POSTPONED UNTIL BREZHNEV HAS BEEN HERE. A MORE LIKELY REASON, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, IS THE PRESENT DISHARMONY IN BELGRADE. THIS SCHOOL OF THOUGHT HAS IT THAT THE CZECHS WILL ACCEPT ONLY AFTER CSCE HAS BEEN SETTLED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 03781

5. CHNOUPEK MADE CLEAR THAT HUSAK'S VISIT, WHENEVER IT
TAKES PLACE, MUST MAKE AN IMPACT ON GERMAN-CZECH
RELATIONS. THE FRG ATTRIBUTES CHNOUPEK'S INSISTENCE ON
THIS POINT TO HUSAK'S CONCERN THAT THE VISIT COULD
BECOME A SOURCE OF CRITICISM IF IT LACKS CONTENT. THE
GERMANS ARE PREPARED TO GIVE THE VISIT, HUSAK'S FIRST
IN THE WEST, A SUBSTANTIVE TONE, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT
YET CLEAR HOW THEY WILL DO SO. AT PRESENT THE ONLY
EVENT SCHEDULED IS THE SIGNING OF A CULTURAL AGREEMENT
WHICH WAS INITIALED DURING CHNOUPEK'S TRIP. EVEN THIS
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IS THE CUSTOMARY FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT, DEVOID OF AN IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOL BECAUSE OF THE APPLICABILITY OF THE LATTER TO BERLIN (REF D).

6. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING RECENT INDICATIONS OF A CZECH DESIRE FOR BROADER TIES WITH THE WEST (AS EXPRESSED TO THE WEHNER DELEGATION, REF (A), OUR WORKING LEVEL SOURCES IN THE CHANCELLERY AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT PROSPECTS IN THIS AREA. THEY SEE SOVIET AND GDR INFLUENCE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS RESTRAINING FACTORS AND OPINE FURTHER THAT THE CZECHS HAVE THUS FAR SHOWN LITTLE INITIATIVE, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD. IN SHORT THEY REMAIN UNCONVINCED AND THE RELUCTANCE OF PRAGUE TO FIRM UP THE HUSAK VISIT HAS REINFORCED THEIR VIEW THAT FRG-CZECH RELATIONS ARE NOT HEADED FOR A DRAMATIC UPTURN -- REGARDLESS OF THE TIMING OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S VISIT HERE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BONN03781
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780094-0500
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803121/aaaadyye.tel
Line Count: 191
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c3585ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BONN 2190, 78 PRAGUE 176, 78 BONN 20595, 78 BONN 19081
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3161759
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CZECH FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO FRG
TAGS: PEPR, GE, CZ, (CHNOUPEK, BOHUSLAV)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c3585ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014